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TO RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE 6041  
INFO RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 3804  
RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN PRIORITY 6614  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 5366  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 6989  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 6995  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 8771  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 6777  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 6530  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 2521  
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 8154  
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 6500  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0710  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 9794  
RUEHNEH/AMCONSUL HYDERABAD PRIORITY 0120  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 3417  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 2807  
RUEHRN/USMISSION UN ROME PRIORITY 0731  
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RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 9427

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 STATE 102030

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PTER](#) [EAID](#) [ICRC](#) [UN](#) [IN](#) [CE](#) [NP](#)  
SUBJECT: SRI LANKA/NEPAL: SCA A/S BLAKE'S SEPTEMBER 29,  
2009 MEETING WITH UN UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL FOR POLITICAL  
AFFAIRS LYNN PASCOE AND UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL FOR  
HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS JOHN HOLMES

Classified By: SCA A/S Robert O. Blake, Jr. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) September 29, 2009; 12:00 p.m.; New York.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Participants:

U.S.  
SCA A/S Blake  
Donald Camp, Senior Area Adviser, USUN  
Douglas Mercado, Adviser, Humanitarian Affairs, USUN  
Anthony Renzulli (SCA Notetaker)

UN  
U/SYG for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe  
U/SYG for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes  
Lisa Buttenheim, Director, Middle East and West Asia  
Division, Dept. of Political Affairs  
Anne Gueguen-Mohsen, Political Affairs Officer, Dept. of  
Political Affairs  
Andrew Cox, Chief of Staff to U/SYG Holmes

[1](#)3. (C) SUMMARY. In a September 29 meeting on the margins of the UN General Assembly, UN Under-Secretaries General Pascoe and Holmes questioned the government of Sri Lanka's credibility, especially on IDP returns, but said top UN officials would continue to press the GSL on the importance of allowing freedom of movement. The UN will not support new closed transit camps, and is urging that screened and low-risk IDPs be given freedom of movement. A/S Blake expressed appreciation that U.S. and UN messages are in synch. Pascoe and Holmes offered to reinforce to GSL officials the importance of retaining the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Sri Lanka, but have been asked by the ICRC to let it fight its own battles. Pascoe doubted that the GSL was prepared to take meaningful steps on accountability in the near-term before elections in early 2010, but suggested that a process for political reconciliation was beginning to take off. Blake briefed on the draft report to Congress on violations of international

humanitarian law by both sides during the war. On Nepal, Pascoe noted concern about the government's lack of urgency to bring the Maoists back into the political process; India too seemed complacent. The status quo risks a return to violence, he said. END SUMMARY.

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SRI LANKA: IDP RETURNS  
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¶4. (C) Pascoe, who recently visited Sri Lanka, questioned the credibility of GSL officials; no one believes they can meet their current timetable for moving people out of the camps. A/S Blake agreed, saying he had urged the GSL to demonstrate some real successes on the ground, because nobody believes them anymore. The U.S. has stressed the importance of working with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and others to figure out a way to resettle significant numbers of IDPs. He noted the discussion within the USG on continuing to finance humanitarian assistance to IDPs in closed camps that do not meet international standards for treatment of displaced persons; the U.S. is exploring ways to use food aid and other assistance to support the returns process.

¶5. (C) Holmes said that his advice to the Sri Lankans is to open the camps. At the very least, allow freedom of movement

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SUBJECT: SRI LANKA/NEPAL: SCA A/S BLAKE'S SEPTEMBER 29, 2009 MEETING WITH UN UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS LYNN PASCOE AND UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL F for screened and/or low risk detainees; the UN will not support any new closed camps. The GSL should not detain all IDPs out of concern for the presence of LTTE combatants. Rather, it needs to begin to allow low-risk detainees to have greater freedom of movement. He noted that UNSYG Special Representative on the Human Rights of IDPs Walter Kaelin, who had recently returned from Sri Lanka, pressed this point with Presidential Adviser Basil Rajapaksa. The military, according to Holmes, is concerned that recent returnees were not properly screened.

¶6. (C) Pascoe observed that, during his visit, the GSL officials wanted to show that they are doing something on IDP returns, and they are. Demining, for example, is proceeding, at least in the Mannar area. Reconstruction in Mannar is not a charade, he went on, but resettling 2,500 families is only the tip of the iceberg. Pascoe opined that the GSL is overwhelmingly concerned that if IDPs are not properly screened, LTTE remnants in the camps could get their hands on remaining arms caches and trigger a bombing or other terrorist act before the elections. Blake expressed skepticism that these remnants represented much of a threat, with all of the top LTTE leadership either killed or captured. More positively, Pascoe said, GSL officials are beginning to recognize that they could better monitor former LTTE in their villages than in the camps, i.e., they are beginning to form a security argument for expediting IDP returns. Indeed, the camps are a tinderbox; failure to decongest Manik Farm poses significant security risks.

¶7. (C) Pascoe said UN officials would continue to travel to Sri Lanka to "pester" GSL officials; the UN has no other leverage. Following Kaelin and Pascoe, Holmes will travel to Sri Lanka; then Pascoe or UNSYG Chief of Staff Vijay Nambiar will return. A/S Blake noted that he and Assistant Secretary Schwartz would return to the region in the fall to reinforce these points.

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ICRC  
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¶8. (C) A/S Blake regretted the current state of GSL-ICRC relations, noting the very critical role ICRC had played on human rights and the constructive relationship the GSL had

previously had with the ICRC. He asked if Pascoe had raised the ICRC during his visit. Holmes surmised that the Sri Lankan military is taking revenge on the ICRC, which it believes abetted the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) in the past. Holmes and Pascoe had asked the ICRC if it wanted help in retaining its mandate in Sri Lanka, but, as usual, the ICRC preferred to fight its own battles. ICRC has explained to the government what it is in Sri Lanka to do; if the government does not want it there, it will leave. It has already lost access to former LTTE combatants. Expelling the ICRC, Holmes said, would be "daft." Pascoe noted that he told FM Bogollagama earlier on September 29 that Sri Lanka is going to need the ICRC to look after the rights of the 10-15,000 LTTE detainees it is presently holding.

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POLITICAL RECONCILIATION;  
ACCOUNTABILITY  
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¶9. (C) Blake previewed for Holmes and Pascoe the report to Congress being prepared by the State Department Office of War Crimes Investigations (S/WCI) on potential violations of international humanitarian law and crimes against humanity committed by both sides during the final stages of the conflict in Sri Lanka. He asked Holmes and Pascoe if there is discussion within the UN on supporting an accountability process in Sri Lanka.

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¶10. (C) Pascoe observed that the government is not yet prepared to take meaningful steps on accountability, but that political reconciliation is beginning to gain traction. The opposition Tamil National Alliance (TNA), for example, has shown some enthusiasm for engaging with the GSL. The UN continues to push on accountability. It would rather have the Sri Lankan government initiate a process that the UN could assist with, but if the government does not do it, then there are international mechanisms that could. Blake questioned President Rajapaksa's decision to delay steps toward reconciliation and devolution until after spring 2010 elections, noting that he has already weakened and divided the political opposition; from his political perspective, any loss in nationalist votes would be offset by gains from liberals and Tamils.

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NEPAL: COMPLACENCY IN BRINGING  
MAOISTS INTO THE POLITICAL PROCESS  
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¶11. (C) Pascoe noted his meeting in New York with Nepali PM Nepal, expressing concern about the GON's lack of urgency to bring the Maoists back into the political process. India, too, had shown complacency, he said. A lack of progress risks a return to violence and civil war, Pascoe cautioned. Blake agreed, but questioned why it would be in India's interest to favor the status quo. He told Pascoe he would raise the issue with his Indian counterparts.  
CLINTON